
**Tennessee Teacher Licensure Standards:
Special Education, School Speech-Language Therapy Associate, PreK-12**

The Background:

Currently, the number of personnel who meet the criteria to work in a school setting as school speech-language pathologists and who are available and willing to work for school systems is inadequate. The Board adopted a number of rule changes in January 2005 that address this problem. At the request of the State Board of Education, the Department of Education formed a task force to address other issues not covered in the rule changes. To provide the personnel needed to deliver speech-language services to eligible students, the task force explored changing the current service delivery model. A status report on the work of the task force was presented to the Board in August 2005.

One of the recommendations of the task force was the development of a three-tier model, an outline of which was included in the report to the Board. The model aligns with the standards and guidelines of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, meets the requirements of the Tennessee Board of Communication Sciences and Disorders, and meets the Medicaid Fee for Service Guidelines. When implemented, the model will increase the availability of services and maintain high quality, and may reduce costs to school systems.

Level I in the model is comprised of licensed Speech-Language Pathologists who perform the full range of speech-language services. They provide diagnostic and therapeutic services, develop individualized education plans (IEPs), provide supervision of Speech-Language Therapy Associates and Educational Paraprofessionals, and work with other school professionals.

Level II is comprised of Speech-Language Therapy Associates who are support personnel. Following academic preparation, they serve as members of educational teams in school-based settings and are specifically trained to supplement—not supplant—the services of Speech Language Pathologists. They receive direct and indirect supervision from the Speech Language Pathologists. Specifically, they undertake such responsibilities as obtaining case histories and work samples, completing observation checklists, following documented treatment plans and treatment protocols developed by the Speech Language Pathologist, and providing indirect student services as directed by the supervising Speech Language Pathologist. They may also perform the duties described under level III.

Level III is comprised of Educational Paraprofessionals who perform standard educational assistant duties. When working with a speech-language team these include such things as assisting with informal documentation as directed by the

Speech-Language Pathologist, performing checks and maintenance of equipment, preparing materials and scheduling activities, documenting student performance and tallying graphs, and accompanying students to and from the testing or therapy room. They also work under the supervision of the Speech-Language Pathologist.

The proposed licensure standards for Speech-Language Therapy Associates were developed by the task force, comprised of speech-language pathologists, audiologists, supervisors, and higher education faculty and representing various constituency groups. A list of members is attached.

The proposed standards are consistent with guidelines of the American-Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

The proposed standards would become effective for candidates seeking licensure no later than September 1, 2008.

The school speech-language therapy associate license will become available to current bachelor's level speech-language teachers September 1, 2006.

The proposed standards have been circulated to education constituency groups for review and comment.

The Recommendation:

The Advisory Council on Teacher Education and Certification recommends approval of the proposed licensure standards on final reading. The SBE staff concurs with this recommendation.

**Tennessee Teacher Licensure Standards
Special Education, School Speech-Language Therapy
Associate (PreK-12)
January 27, 2006**

Individuals who seek licensure as a school speech-language therapy associate complete programs of study in speech-language at the bachelor's or associate levels. In addition, they develop the knowledge and skills required for effective performance in the school setting. In the school, the associate works under the supervision of a speech-language pathologist. The education and professional development of these individuals is initiated in course work, refined in field experiences, and enhanced during professional practice. School speech language therapy associate candidates meet the following performance standards:

Standard 1

Speech-Language Pathology Knowledge Base.

Candidates understand and apply the knowledge base specific to speech-language pathology.

Supporting Explanation

- 1.1 Candidates understand and apply the history and foundations of speech-language pathology and emerging technologies.
- 1.2 Candidates understand the various roles and functions of the school speech-language therapy associate in relationship to the speech-language pathologist.
- 1.3 Candidates understand the normal processes of communication, including normal speech, language, communication and hearing development; phonetics; and communication across the life span.
- 1.4 Candidates understand communication disorders and apply that understanding in carrying out treatment plans.
- 1.5 Candidates understand cultural and linguistic factors that influence communication including language and culture, nonverbal communication, sign language and other manually coded systems, bilingualism and multicultural issues.
- 1.6 Candidates have technical skills in speech language disorders to implement services consistent with best practice and ethical requirements under the supervision of a speech-language pathologist.

Standard 2

Speech-Language Services in a School Setting

Candidates demonstrate knowledge and skills specific to providing speech-language services in a school setting.

Supporting explanation

- 2.1 Candidates understand the culture of the school and the role of the speech-language therapy associate in the school.
- 2.2 Candidates demonstrate understanding of federal, state, and local laws and policies related to working in schools.
- 2.3 Candidates communicate effectively in oral and written form.
- 2.4 Candidates function as contributing members of collaborative teams.
- 2.5 Candidates implement speech-language treatment plans and treatment protocols in the general education classroom and other settings. They seek clarification from supervising speech-language pathologists as needed and demonstrate the use of feedback.
- 2.6 Candidates apply classroom and behavior management strategies in a variety of instructional and treatment settings.
- 2.7 Candidates relate to students in a supportive and professional manner, maintain confidentiality, and follow health and safety precautions.

Program Implementation Standards

1. The program of study enables school speech-language therapy associates to serve students from birth through age 21 to meet their Individualized Education Plan goals.
2. Candidates acquire the knowledge and skills required to work as a school speech-language therapy associate by completing a program of studies. The program may be offered at the bachelor's or associate level; may be designed as a major or as a minor; and may be offered to candidates who already have a bachelor's or an associate degree in some other field. The program may be offered by a college or department of speech-language pathology or may be offered collaboratively with other college units. In designing a program of study for individual candidates, the institution of higher education assesses the candidate's background by examining the candidate's transcript, providing opportunities to test out of courses, reviewing prior experience, and administering any other necessary assessments. Completion of the special education core is not required of school speech-language therapy associates.

3. Candidates for licensure as a school speech-language therapy associate complete a program of study specified for speech-language therapy associate at an institution whose program has been approved by the State Board of Education in accordance with the program approval procedures of the Board. The candidate must be recommended for licensure jointly by the college or department of education and the college or department of speech-language pathology. Candidates will be issued the speech-language therapy associate license.
4. Programs preparing speech-language therapy associates provide opportunities for candidates to complete a minimum of 100 clock hours of clinical experience that include appropriate experiences for learning job responsibilities and workplace practices. Clinical experiences—in which the candidate is engaged in student contact—are supervised by a licensed speech-language pathologist who has at least two years of post licensure experience.
5. Institutions of higher education use the following documents (as they may be amended) when planning, implementing and evaluating programs preparing school speech-language therapy associates: Model Standards for Licensing General and Special Education Teachers of Students with Disabilities: A Resource for State Dialogue, developed by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (2001); Guidelines for the Training, Use, and Supervision of Speech-Language Pathology Assistants, American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (2004); and other current research on speech-language issues.
6. These licensure standards become effective for candidates seeking licensure no later than September 1, 2008. Institutions with programs preparing school speech-language therapy associates will submit standards for conditional approval to the Department of Education no later than April 1, 2007.
7. The school speech-language therapy associate license will become available to current bachelor's level speech-language teachers September 1, 2006.

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